

1892 New York (C. & G.) - Columbian  
Exposition, 1892

THE COMMITTEE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION  
OF 1892, OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION.

Hon. CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW, *Chairman.*

Hon. WILLIAM C. WHITNEY, *Vice-Chairman.*

WILLIAM E. D. STOKES, *Secretary.*

LETTERS OF

WILLIAM E. D. STOKES,

*Secretary of the Committee on Legislation,*

TO

His Excellency HERBERT W. LADD,

*Governor of Rhode Island, U. S.,*

AND THE

BOARD OF TRADE OF PROVIDENCE, R. I.,

read at the meetings of the Board on the 7th and 15th  
of October, 1889, on the question of the location of the  
Exposition, with their action thereon.

DOUGLAS TAYLOR, PRINTER, NEW YORK.

The Committee for the International Exposition  
of 1892.

Hon. HUGH J. GRANT, Mayor,

*Chairman.*

W. McM. SPEER,

*Secretary.*

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Committee on Legislation.

Hon. CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW, *Chairman.* Hon. WM. C. WHITNEY, *Vice-Chairman.*

WILLIAM E. D. STOKES, *Secretary.*

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Gen. WM. T. SHERMAN.  
AMBROSE SNOW.  
WM. E. D. STOKES.  
JAMES W. TAPPIN.  
FRANCIS B. THURBER.  
HORACE WHITE.

Hon. WM. C. WHITNEY.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Messrs.  
CALHOUN, CORNELL, HEWITT, MILLER, PLATT, ROOT, THURBER.

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W. E. D. STOKES, *Secretary*, 146 Broadway, N. Y.

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At the Board of Trade of Providence, Rhode Island, there was held on the 8th October, 1889, a meeting of the mercantile and manufacturing interests of the State, to ascertain the feelings of the State in regard to the location of the International Exposition of 1892. His Excellency Governor Herbert L. Ladd, who presided, had invited the Mayors of New York and of Chicago to present the claims of their cities.

In response to this, the Mayor of New York referred the invitation to the Committee on Legislation. Mr. Depew, the Chairman, sent the telegram, and Mr. Stokes, the Secretary, sent the letter which follows:

NEW YORK CITY, Oct. 8th, 1889.

*To His Excellency* GOVERNOR LADD,  
Providence, Rhode Island :

The Mayor has referred your telegram to the Committee on Legislation, and I am just in receipt of it. We find it impossible for a representative to be at your meeting to-day. New York is deeply in earnest and will use every effort to secure the Fair and to make it a success. Our Secretary, Mr. Stokes, has sent you a communication. We confidently rely on the assistance of Rhode Island in making the Fair at New York the greatest exhibition ever held.

CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW.



NEW YORK, 146 BROADWAY, }  
October 7th, 1889. }

*To His Excellency* GOVERNOR LADD,  
Providence, R. I.

SIR :

Your telegram to His Honor Hugh J. Grant, Mayor of this City, inviting him to present at the meeting to be held at noon, to-morrow, at Providence, the claims of New York, as the location for the Exposition of 1892, was received to-day, and was referred by him to me, as he telegraphed to you.

I regret that I am not able, at such short notice, to arrange this evening to attend your meeting in person. I will, however, on behalf of the Committee on which I am placed by the Mayor, endeavor briefly to state to you the reasons why the Exposition of 1892 should be held in the City of New York.

The chief reason is found in the fact that the proposed fair is to be an International one. It should, therefore, be held at the city most accessible to foreign countries. No other place meets this condition.

New York is the great seaport of the continent, most frequented by steamers and with the largest number of arrivals and departures of trans-Atlantic passengers. It is the commercial centre, and in financial and business affairs it is the heart of the continent. It is, as well, the greatest manufacturing city, and all this can be affirmed without disparagement of any other city.

Of the whole continent, extending 3,000 miles from the Atlantic to the Pacific, more than one-third of the population is contained in States within 400 miles of New York. Within ten miles of the city there are about three and one-half millions of people. It is the most accessible point on the seaboard, by railroad and water transit, and is the terminus of every railroad.

It has the largest hotel accommodation for travelers.

These considerations have force because the success of the Exposition depends upon the number of visitors who daily seek admission. This number depends on local density of population and accessibility to those who travel to attend it.

The experience of European nations in managing and locating their great fairs enforces these views.

They have located them at their great centres of population and travel, at Paris, London and Vienna, and never elsewhere.

New York City is known all over the world better than any other city of this country, and as well as London or Paris.

It has come to equal, and in some respects surpass them among the great cities of Christendom. The site selected for the Fair has more than ample area and is along the border of the Hudson River, where vessels can land at the Fair grounds in deep water, and this water communication is not broken by a shallow or a bar for ships of a heavy draft to all the remote shores of the ocean. This means cheap freight and charges for all the exhibits sent to the Fair. The site rises from the water border to a round hill 150 feet in height, with a flat top, admirably adapted for public buildings. There is no such site within the limits of any city in this country or in Europe. It commands a view of forty miles in every direction, from the mountains to the sea. It is surrounded by beautiful parks.

For healthfulness and cool summer breezes over the broad Hudson River, and from Long Island Sound, it is the pleasantest spot in the whole Atlantic slope. New York City itself is the finest exhibit this country has to show. Not only does the city meet all the conditions required for the location, but these conditions exclude every other city. The site has been determined and the financial plans will be well matured and acceptable, for the Fair is to be International and not a Fair of this country or any section of it.

We celebrate the discovery by Columbus ; he crossed the



sea four centuries ago ; he reached the continents of North and South America ; he did it for the countries of Europe, whose explorations forthwith extended over the whole earth. It is not simply an affair of our country, but for the whole world. And for this, not we alone, but all nations and peoples unite to do him honor. The Fair must of necessity be International and the only location is the chief city of the New World which he discovered.

Yours very respectfully,

W. E. D. STOKES,  
*Secretary.*

The response from Chicago was by Mayor Dewitt C. Cregier :

CHICAGO, 7th October, 1889.

GOVERNOR LADD :

We respectfully submit the following questions and suggestions :

FIRST.—What are the indispensable requirements of an eligible location for the World's Fair ?

SECOND.—Confining our question to cities of over a million inhabitants, has any other than Chicago so cool, comfortable and wholesome a Summer climate : Can any offer to millions of visitors in the dog days an equal immunity from sun stroke and disease.

THIRD.—Has any so limitless a supply of fresh air and fresh water as the works now in process of construction insure to Chicago from the great lake which is at once her refrigerator and her fountain.

FOURTH.—With her eleven hundred and sixty hotels and thirty-eight railroads, can any offer equal hotel accommodation and railroad facilities, with assurance from hotels of no increased charges, and with like assurance that inland

transportation of foreign exhibits will not exceed the cost that will be incurred in the unavoidable breaking bulk with extra carting and handling elsewhere.

FIFTH.—As World's Fairs and national celebrations have hitherto been held in the extreme East and South, is it not the West's turn now, by the rules of rotation and by every consideration of comity and fairness.

SIXTH.—Why should not all Americans and attending foreigners have an opportunity of judging of the country as a whole, not by a mere inspection of its outer edge, but by coming into its body and witnessing its phenomenal success.

SEVENTH.—Why should they not all come to its greatest inland city, a fair in itself as a marvelous growth of a few years from a frontier camp to a Metropolis of immeasurable destiny, and see for themselves whether it is true or false that she is the focus of the greatest inland commerce of the world. That she has in fact the finest group of business structures, the most extensive park system, the largest and most beautiful drives, including that named after and worthy of Sheridan, to be found on this continent, and in the absence of an Eiffel tower, another structure, the Auditorium, of several times the cost and incomparably greater utility.

EIGHTH.—Why is it not peculiarly appropriate that the Columbus Exposition should be distinctively and grandly American?

NINTH.—Why should not the nation bid this great young city, covering one hundred and seventy-six square miles, a hearty God speed in the great enterprise with which it grapples. As the West consumes a great proportion of Rhode Island's manufactures, why should not Rhode Island be conspicuous in presenting her manufactured products to her western consumers. A small State, yet her

products being vast, enables her to grasp the situation and take a truly broad and national view of the question.

Please defer action for a week and we will send a representative who will present facts of greater importance bearing upon this subject. Answer.

DEWITT C. CREGIER.

In accordance with this request the meeting was adjourned to Tuesday, 15th October, 1889. To this meeting the Committee on Legislation sent the following letter :

NEW YORK, 14th October, 1889.

*To his Excellency, the Hon. HERBERT H. LADD,*  
Governor and Chairman, Providence, R. I.

SIR :

We recognize the wisdom of the adjournment of your meeting to consider the location of the International Exposition of 1892, and your courtesy in re-opening the discussion of the claims of Chicago for the location.

Besides the considerations we had the honor to present to you at your first meeting, we will add a few further suggestions.

No one is prouder of Chicago than the people of this city. It was a great citizen of New York, who, years ago, said "Young men, go West, and grow up with the country." They went; and so Chicago grew up to be great in obedience to New York. The result is a crown of honor to her. Many of her foremost citizens went from New York. Her men of wealth and intelligence, when they retire from active business, come, many of them, to this Metropolitan and Cosmopolitan City to add to its renown. The bond between us is growing every day and can never be severed.

The elements of Chicago's greatness, recounted by Mayor Cregier, are justly impressive. Every man will uphold



them as he would the praises of a beautiful sister. Her salubrity, her water works, her hotels, her railroads, her superb buildings, her parks are marvelous, and she is undoubtedly the site for anything that is, as she claims, "to be distinctively and grandly American." But they do not reach the point of making her the focus of Internationality, nor do they claim it.

New York has like elements of city growth and proofs of prosperity; but as New York compares itself with London and Paris, cities rich with the expenditure of centuries and the embellishments of renowned art, it strives modestly after the finest and severest results in building, in the perfection of its adaptations to business and domestic life, and in landscape art as shown in its parks, with a subdued ambition to become the best modern city, not of this country, but of all Christendom. Its commerce is not because of its own efforts, but because the world of ships crowd into its harbor. Its railroads come here to meet and participate in this commerce, and as the great New Yorker whom we have already quoted, Horace Greeley, whom Chicago also venerates, said when he was shown the extent of her great railroad systems, "All these roads have one terminus in New York."

These things make New York the *international* point of this continent. There are few grounds on which to dispute the claim of Chicago to be "the focus of the greatest inland commerce of the world," if that were the question, if this were a national fair, if it were an affair of this continent, but this is to be an *International Exposition* and it is the feature of *internationality* that gives the preference to New York. What the whole country has to do with international affairs passes into and is received from New York. Its growth is a natural concentration, and when foreign visitors with their goods arrive here, they will say, "*Ne plus ultra*," not even for the attractions of beautiful Chicago.

In the May Centennial of this year people poured into

this city, over a million and a half of them, and not one lacked food or shelter; nor were the accommodations of the Hotels exhausted. These are matters of only ordinary every day concern.

Amid a resident population of three and one-half millions the advent of a few hundred thousand more does not put us or them to the slightest inconvenience. The number of passengers carried by our city cars is daily counted by millions.

Our Summer climate so closely resembles that of Rhode Island and is so purified by the sea breezes, that this is one of the favorite spots on the Atlantic coast as a resort for visitors from all the West, who come even from Chicago to New York and Newport to

“Sate them with kisses of the broad Atlantic.”

Our nearby resorts along the Jersey coast and on Long Island are healthful and cool in mid-Summer, beyond comparison, and capacious enough for hundreds of thousands. By our new aqueduct our water supply from the pure mountain springs in the Highlands of the Hudson will be quadrupled, and for a “refrigerator” we have on one side three thousand miles of the great ocean, and on the other the mountain breezes of the whole range of the Alleghanies and Catskills.

Even without a Fair, the moment a foreigner who comes here on a visit starts inland to see the country, Chicago as “the centre of our great inland commerce” will be the first attraction.

New York will not be behindhand in financial support. Its leaders in finance are many of them men retired from active business, who move cautiously and surely.

The City authorities have proposed to expend fifteen millions in land and buildings. The proposal for a popular subscription, started at five millions, was so warmly welcomed that it is assured as soon as the Finance Committee



announce the terms on which it will be received. This is a sound basis, and further financial aid is in readiness.

The World's Fair will be held in New York, near New England, the seat of ingenuity and the birthplace of mechanical inventions, which have benefitted the whole world, lightened the burdens of the laboring classes and increased their earnings one-hundredfold. These have proved to these United States what Columbus trusted the discovery of the New World would be to Spain—"a source of much wealth." As your illustrious Burnside said of his men, that he could "always rely upon them," so we now say of Rhode Island.

If we were to have a State Fair and we wished to make it a great success would we locate it at Albany, because it was our Capital, or locate it where the greatest number could most conveniently attend and be most comfortably sheltered and fed? Did England locate her International Fair at great Birmingham or at London? At which place would it have been the greatest financial benefit to her whole country? The Exposition at Vienna was a dismal failure because it was too far inland.

Starting from the Battery on a level but little above the tide, as one goes up town in New York higher levels are reached, one above the other—Murray Hill, Lenox Hill, the heights in Central Park and the cliffs of Riverside. This progressive ascent attains a summit at Bloomingdale Heights, seven miles from the Battery, and 150 feet high. This is the Citadel of the city, for above it the hill falls abruptly, nearly to the river level in Manhattan Valley. Here was fought the decisive battle of Harlem in the War of the Revolution.

The region west of the Central Park is not surpassed in natural beauty by any suburb of any city, and it is filling with the finest residences, so that even families from Chicago come to dwell there and to enjoy life, for its pure and sootless atmosphere. Its growth and beauty are the



marvel of New York. It is a high plateau ascending gradually to this summit of Bloomingdale Heights, which we have chosen as the best we have for the site of the Exposition. Its adaptation, as well as its grand beauty, are unsurpassed. This hill commands a view of the broad Hudson, where there is room for the anchorage and parade of the grand fleets of Spain, and of all the other nations which, it has been already announced, will visit us.

When the Columbus tower shall be erected upon it, the visitor will scan the broad Atlantic for a quadrant of the horizon, the ocean that Columbus traversed, yet we do not claim that he can see the track of his "Caravel." In our broad sheltered harbors a thousand or more yachts will ride in readiness for the great "International yacht race for the 'Columbus Cup'—a challenge to the world."

When the people of Rochester showed Daniel Webster the falls of the Genesee he told them that no people who had a water-fall 150 feet high ever lost their liberties; nor can we when we have this hill for a site ever lose the fair; nor can any man, when he stands upon it, vote against it.

The strangers who come from the distant cities of the world; one who at home stands at the Castle at Edinburgh—the Miniata at Florence—the Church of San Martino at Naples—the Pincian Hill at Rome—or the terraced palaces behind Genoa, will all unite in saying that this hill is the worthy Acropolis of a metropolitan city; while to the dwellers in the lowlands about London, or Paris, or Berlin, or to those who live on the beautiful Western prairies, it will be a revelation.

The Hudson River at its feet was the inspiration of the sweetest poets and writers of our land, of Irving, Bryant, Halleck, Drake and Poe, and through them its beauties have found international fame. They unite with Halleck in

"The esteem  
"We bear this fairy city of the heart."

Columbus was the precursor of the bold sailors who circumnavigated the world. What he and his Spanish fol-

lowers did was for Spain, for the cross and for gold ; and for centuries his newly discovered land belonged to Spain. England and Holland did the same thing for freedom, for trade and for dominion. From the European point of view, the honor of the discovery of the New World belonged to the Old, as to them belonged the daring and the perils of their explorations and settlements, and this honor they will not forego. From the North Sea to the Mediterranean, they count it as their glory, from which we, their sons, are receiving the material benefits. They will come here to receive their reward in honor, as they see ours in prosperity. Even the poor Italian in the streets will be treated, in that great day, with brotherly reverence. This sentiment is not to be disregarded. It is the spirit in which the internationality of the fair subsists. Hence will start the blessings which will again circumnavigate the globe for the good of all nations, and bind us anew as one in heart, as Columbus made the union of men possible over the face of the unknown and undiscovered earth.

Were Columbus himself once more alive and permitted to-day, after four hundred years, to visit one only of the great cities of the Western Hemisphere, which one would he be most desirous of seeing ? Would it not be the city of the greatest population, the greatest wealth, the greatest manufacturing, commercial and shipping centre ? This is true of everyone else. A location for this Exposition of 1892 must be selected which is most accessible to and most representative of all the Americas, North, Central and South.

There are many millions of our Western prairie citizens who have never seen a mountain or the Atlantic Ocean, and to them, as to us, the sight and inspection of even one of our great ocean steamers is a marvel in itself.

Columbus found what he thought to be the "far Cathay." That is the nearest approach he made to Chicago. He never reached it, for his description does not fit.



He says: "I found only a few hamlets, with the inhabitants of which I could not hold conversation, because they all immediately fled." Then he describes his trade with them. "Whether it be something of value, or of little worth, that is offered to them, they are satisfied. They even took bits of the broken hoops of the wine barrels and gave, like fools, all they possessed, in exchange, inasmuch that I thought it was wrong and forbade it." Certainly this was not Chicago.

Witness how he closes his narrative of the discovery, which is to be celebrated not by us but by the whole world. This is the spirit to which New York most heartily responds.

"But our Redeemer hath granted this victory to our illustrious King and Queen and their kingdoms, which have acquired great fame by an event of such high importance in which all Christendom ought to rejoice and which it ought to celebrate with great festivals, and the offering of solemn thanks to the Holy Trinity, with many solemn prayers, both for the great exaltation which may accrue to them in turning so many nations to our holy faith, and also for the temporal benefits which will bring great refreshment and gain, not only to Spain, but to all Christians. Thus briefly in accordance with the events."

This stamps its internationality.

Yours very respectfully,

W. E. D. STOKES,  
*Secretary.*



GOVERNOR LADD presided at the meeting on the 15th October.

The foregoing letter of Mr. Stokes was read as the argument for New York. Hon. Thomas B. Bryan, of Chicago, in an eloquent and forcible address, presented the claims of Chicago ; Alexander D. Anderson those of Washington.

The following telegrams from Mayor Grant and ex-Senator Platt were read :

NEW YORK, October 15.

*His Excellency*, GOVERNOR LADD :

The people of New York desire that the World's Fair of 1892 should be held in their City, and hope that the people in your State will aid them in securing it.

HUGH J. GRANT.

NEW YORK, October 15.

GOVERNOR LADD :

New York looks to Rhode Island for her support and assistance in making the International Exposition of 1892, in New York City, a grand success. Our secretary, Mr. Stokes, has sent you a communication.

THOMAS C. PLATT.

J. N. STARKWEATHER, President of the Board of Trade, then offered the following, which was adopted :

*Resolved*, That an Exposition in 1892, in honor of the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America, is the best manner in which to celebrate so important an historical event.

*Resolved*, That the success of such an Exhibition must depend upon its exhibits and its patronage.

*Resolved*, That New York City, being the largest manufacturing City in America, is the centre of all the various industries whose exhibits would contribute to make an exposition inviting.

*Resolved*, That the agricultural and mining exhibits being more novel to Eastern people, would be a greater attraction in New York City than anywhere else, alike from the interest capital would take in it and the larger number of people.

*Resolved*, That New York City is the centre of a large population which can visit the Fair and return in one day, thus insuring a success.

*Resolved*, That New York City from its harbor and commerce is known all over the world as is no other American City.

*Resolved*, That Rhode Island, while fully cognizant of the claims of Chicago and Washington, believes that the City of New York has the most commanding advantages for success.

*Resolved*, That Rhode Island casts her vote for New York for first choice and Chicago for second choice, and will assist, as far as lies in her power, to make the Exposition worthy the event wherever held.

*Resolved*, That his Excellency the Governor be requested to transmit copies of these resolutions to the President of the United States and members of the Cabinet, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, the Governors of the various States and Territories, the Mayors of the principal cities and the presidents of all commercial bodies.

“A great mass meeting of Rhode Island citizens was held in the Capitol of that State yesterday. New York was enthusiastically endorsed as the site for the Exposition of 1892.

“If Providence be with us, who can be against us?”—  
*New York Herald*, Oct. 16, 1889.